

Adolescent and Caregiver Perceptions of Substance Use Screening in the Emergency Departments (ED).

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Introduction

- Adolescent SUD contributes to mental health crises, risky behaviors, and ED visits
- The ED is a key setting for screening, but privacy, trust, and stigma concerns may limit uptake
- This study examines adolescent and caregiver perceptions to improve screening effectiveness.

Objectives

1. Identify perceived barriers and facilitators to adolescent SUD screening in the EDs.
2. Understand caregiver and adolescent attitudes toward SUD screening.
3. Inform future implementation strategies for ED-based adolescent SUD screening.

Methods

- **Design:** Cross-sectional survey study
- **Participants:** Adolescents (13–17) and caregivers
- **Survey:** 34 adolescents & 28 caregiver questions, including 4 open-ended
- **Recruitment:** National Qualtrics panel (October 2024)
- **Analysis:** Descriptive statistics; chi-square & t-tests

Adolescents and caregivers support ED-based SUD screening, but privacy, stigma, and legal fears require a confidential, respectful, and collaborative approach.

Survey and
References



Results

- 548 teens, 544 caregivers completed the survey.
- **50%** of teens & **38%** of caregivers rated screening as **important**
- **43%** supported **universal SUD screening** in the ED.
- **71%** of teens would be honest; **84%** of caregivers would **encourage honesty**
- **62%** of teens & **50%** of caregivers feared **legal consequences**
- **Digital screening tools** are preferred by teens
- **Linkage to care** and follow-up services appreciated

Discussion

- Teens and caregivers support ED-based SUD screening but cite privacy, legal concerns, and trust as barriers
- Clear communication, non-judgmental approaches, and digital tools improve acceptability
- Future screening programs should prioritize privacy protections, legal transparency, and collaborative care